

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

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O R 101800Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8756

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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AFDROUGHT

PARIS FOR HELMAN, ROME FOR FODAG, ECBRUSSELS FOR MARTIN

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: U.S. GRAIN ALLOCATIONS TO THE SAHEL

REF: A. STATE 071780, PARA 5 B. BAMAKO 0849

1. DISCUSSION OF MALI FOOD REQUIREMENTS MUST BE BASED ON FACT THAT NOVEMBER IS MILLET/SORGHUM HARVEST MONTH FOR MOST OF MALI, AND CONSEQUENTLY DECISIVE FOR DETERMINING FOOD REQUIREMENTS FOR FOLLOWING YEAR. FOLLOWING ANALYSIS THEREFORE BASED ON A) FOOD NEEDS FOR REMAINDER OF FOOD YEAR 1973-74 (ENDING NOVEMBER 1974) AND B) RELATIONSHIP TO FOOD NEEDS FOR FOOD YEAR 1974-75 (BEGINNING 1974).

2. FOOD YEAR 1973-74

MINISTER OF DEFENSE ESTIMATED COUNTRY-WIDE FOOD DEFICIT AT ABOUT
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250,000 MT, WHICH GOM HOPED TO COVER THROUGH DONOR GIFTS AND

PURCHASES IN FREE MARKET. BEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US INDICATES DONOR COMMITMENTS OF BETWEEN 160,000-165,000 MT, AND GOM PURCHASES OF 77,000 MT, FOR A TOTAL OF 237,000-242,000 MT. THUS, IF MINDEF ESTIMATE OF DEFICIT WAS REASONABLY ACCURATE, AND IF ALL GRAIN IS DELIVERED ON TIME, GOM WILL COME CLOSE TO COVERING GRAIN DEFICIT FOR FOOD YEAR 1974. SINCE, HOWEVER, GRAIN RESERVE STOCK HAS BEEN EXHAUSTED, ANY ERROR IN CALCULATIONS OR DELAY IN DELIVERIES CANNOT BE COVERED FROM PRESENT AVAILABILITIES. ADDITIONAL U.S. ALLOCATION WOULD, THEREFORE, PROVIDE RESERVE AGAINST CONTINGENCIES WHICH ARE ALL TOO LIKELY. FURTHER, IF GRAIN STOCKS ARE LOW, GOM MAY NOT BE ABLE TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF RIVER TRANSPORTATION TO SHIP MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GRAIN TO VIETNAM (BEGINNING MID-AUGUST). ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION WOULD INSURE MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF RIVER.

3. FOOD YEAR 1974-1975

SINCE SEED GRAIN NOT YET PLANTED AND RAINS HAVE NOT YET BEGUN, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT NOVEMBER 1974 HARVEST. PRUDENCE WOULD SEEM TO ARGUE AGAINST ASSUMPTION THAT DROUGHT WILL END THIS YEAR. GRAIN SHIPPED UNDER FIRST QUARTER FY 75 ALLOCATION WOULD ARRIVE IN TIME TO SUPPLEMENT HARVEST, AND THUS HELP AVOID CRISIS RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY SITUATION. EVEN IF HARVEST IS GOOD, IT NOT UNLIKELY THAT, IN LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE OF LAST FIVE YEARS, FARMERS MAY HOLD BACK GREATER AMOUNT OF GRAIN THAN USUAL, WITH CONSEQUENT SHORTAGES IN URBAN AREAS, AGAIN AS RESULT OF LACK OF GRAIN RESERVE. ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION WOULD ALSO BE HEDGE AGAINST THIS CONTINGENCY.

4. FOREGOING CONSIDERATIONS SEEM TO INDICATE FY 75 GRAIN ALLOCATION JUSTIFIABLE. BECAUSE OF DATA AND DELIVERY UNCERTAINTIES AND UNPREDICTABILITY OF HARVEST, PRECISE ESTIMATE OF REQUIREMENTS NOT POSSIBLE, BUT EMBASSY'S BEST ESTIMATE AND RECOMMENDATION IS 20,000 MT.
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